

## Incomplete essay on Vaccines

Note: Now, after waiting for nearly half of a year for any comments, advice and corrections made about the original essay, I've decided to make this essay available to the public domain. Now, there are a lot of claims that I haven't addressed, such as the "mommy instinct", along with some formatting issues such as the lack of footnotes that correspond to the sources at the end of this document but I'll leave that to the public to fill in. Hence which is why I am uploading this essay to archive.org. I've included several sources that analyze vaccines with a critical and scientific eye that weren't included in the original document.

In this essay, I am going to tackle an issue that has been promoted by Bill Maher, Jenny McCarthy and the rest of the anti-vaccination crowd. Vaccines do more harm than good. There are several questions that must be answered. First, are vaccines really more harm than good? Who is behind the modern day anti-vaccination movement and how did it first begin? Is the anti-vaccination movement a feature of the radical environmentalist movement, or are there some groups outside of that circle who still oppose vaccines? Does a "mommy instinct" trump the advice and knowledge of medical professionals? Finally, what is the quality of evidence on both sides of this issue?

First, let's begin with a little bit of history about the reputation of vaccines. Opposition to vaccines isn't a new trend that began when a playboy model decided to use her motherhood to defend her son, who was later diagnosed to not have autism, from the "dangers" of vaccines. The earliest record of people opposing vaccines was in the late 18th century and it was mainly on religious grounds. Rev. Edward Massey is a notable figure who opposed inoculation and his view is summarized in the following sentences from his sermon titled, *The Dangerous and Sinful Practice of Inoculation*:

In this he declared that Job's distemper was probably confluent smallpox; that he had been inoculated doubtless by the devil; that diseases are sent by Providence for the punishment of sin; and that the proposed attempt to prevent them is "a diabolical operation."

However, the people during this time who were supporting vaccines were doing it not only for theological and ethical beliefs but, also for practical reasons. It prevents disease. Once the effectiveness of these early forms of inoculation was shown to the public, the opposition started to lose a lot of ground. Not to mention that people like Massey and his ilk were already outnumbered to begin with. Furthermore, Reverend Edward Massey couldn't use the typical arguments used by Bill Maher and Jenny McCarthy because such things as mercury in vaccines, getting AIDS from dirty needles etc. were not conceived during Massey's time. It's also interesting to note that, in spite of Bill Maher's anti-religious views, McCarthy's career as a Playboy model and Edward Massey's priesthood, they can all agree (with different points and reasons) that vaccines do more harm than good.

Here are three of the most common claims, which I've heard, that are made in opposition to vaccines.

I'm excluding the, "vaccines contain mercury, aborted fetal tissue, rat poison etc." claims because there's so much material out there that can debunk that nonsense far better than I could. However, I'll note those sources at the end of this essay.

Here are the claims:

1. Vaccines can weaken, or compromise, the immune system so that Big Pharma can keep you sick so that they can get rich.
2. You can die from getting a vaccine shot since some people are allergic to the ingredients contained in them.
3. You can die from the vaccine shot itself.

The first claim is counterproductive to the purpose of vaccines, and it's really two claims in one. First, vaccines are made to strengthen the immune system against viruses, not weaken it. However, there are a few cases where vaccines can trigger a phenomenon known as immunosuppression which is probably where the claim originated. Not only is this phenomenon rare, it doesn't last long enough for someone to be exposed to another foreign disease. Furthermore, this can also be triggered by contaminated needles and not the content of the vaccine solution itself (see rebuttal to third claim). Finally, a recent study in Germany has shown that people who've received vaccines are less likely to get infected than the ones who received no vaccinations so it appears that vaccines, do not compromise, or weaken, the immune system to such a degree that it is hazardous.

Secondly, if "Big Pharma" wanted to keep you sick, they wouldn't be giving you something to make you more resistant, or immune, to a disease. Also, there are multiple pharmaceutical companies that are out there and the idea that they are all in the same room together is absurd. To imagine this "Big Pharma" conspiracy, you have to accept the absurdity that the CEOs of each and every one of those companies are not out to bump off the other guy, financially speaking of course. Consider the fact that the development and improvement of a single medical procedure, such as vaccines, can be used to wipe out a competitor or maybe even the rest of the competition...a sort of a corporate atomic weapon for pharmaceutical companies. It is quite possible that this is exactly what is happening! Each and every big pharmaceutical company is out to make you their customer, but at the same time they are tearing out each other's throat by developing vaccines to nullify any medicines or drugs developed by the other guy. Again, and in my opinion, believing that every single big pharmaceutical company out there, that makes and develops vaccines along with drugs and medicine, are all holding hands is just as believable as the thought that every single crime family in the world are in the same bed together.

The second claim has some truth to it. It is indeed possible to die from a vaccine when someone is allergic to the ingredients that are contained in the shot, and this one of the many reasons why doctors ask their patients if they have any known allergies. Of course, if you want to ban vaccines just because some people are allergic to them, never mind the standard precaution taken by doctors as explained above, then why not cauliflower or peanuts? If you want to ban a certain commodity just because some people are allergic to them, yet refuse to do so for another different commodity, then that's just special pleading .

The third claim also has some truth to it. Sometimes, there can be air bubbles within the contents of the vaccine. When you inject someone with a shot filled with air you can cause a heart failure. This is why you see doctors tapping the sides of the shot and/or squirting out some of the contents as a precaution against air bubbles. This can also occur with insulin shots for diabetics, not just vaccines. Also, the needle itself can be contaminated from being used on someone else before and there's a high risk for AIDS from these tainted needles. However, this doesn't occur with vaccine shots but with needles in general. Another reason why you shouldn't use a needle on yourself for more than once is because the needle itself can be damaged or brittle after each use, which increases the risk for other injuries such as puncture wounds from dull or bent needles, shards of metal or broken-off tips embedded in the skin and so on. Of course, and once again, such dangers from needles are not unique among vaccines. Insulin shots and hallucinogens such as heroin also contain the same risks, though users of heroin and other narcotics are at a higher risk from "dirty needles". Finally, patients undergoing the alternative medical practice of acupuncture are also at risk since, as most of you have already guessed, it involves the poking of needles into the human body. In fact, there was a scandal in Montreal, Canada, where nearly 1,200 people were probably exposed to the AIDS virus from acupuncture clinics and practitioners who were reusing needles on their patients. Just as I have stated in my rebuttal of the second claim, if you want to ban vaccines just because the mechanics of the shots themselves (air bubbles and contaminated needles) pose a risk to your health, then why not ban insulin shots, acupuncture and Botox injections? Again, if you want to ban vaccines just for that reason and not do a thing about the other items mentioned above, it's more special pleading.

Sources:

<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0512/15/kl.01.html>

<http://www.pr.com/article/1076>

<http://abob.libs.uga.edu/bobk/whitem10.html>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11023764>

<http://www.thebody.com/content/world/art26467.html>

Extra sources for extra reading on vaccines:

<http://www.quackwatch.org/03HealthPromotion/immu/immu00.html>

<http://skeptoid.com/episodes/4180>

<http://www.aap.org/immunization/families/ingredients.html>